

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

REPORT NO.

SUBJECT Living Conditions in Latvia

DATE DISTR.

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Medical Facilities

1. If a person is ill, he may call the hospital or polyclinic in his area and request that a doctor be sent. Because of the doctor shortage, the doctor may not arrive for several days. The doctor is usually paid by the patient in order to insure better treatment. If the person is critically ill, the doctor orders him admitted to a hospital; if the doctor is unable to help the patient, he asks the polyclinic to send a specialist to the patient. In the event of an accident, the hospital sends an ambulance for the injured person, but the ambulance may arrive up to three hours later, because there are very few ambulances in Lepaya.
2. Diseases common in Lepaya are colds, influenza, tonsillitis, scarlet fever, typhoid fever, diphtheria, cancer, and tuberculosis (incidence of 30 per cent). There is an annual inoculation against typhoid, given at the place of employment or the local polyclinic; a record of immunization is placed in the house book. School children receive inoculations against diphtheria twice a year, and tuberculosis and typhoid prophylaxis is administered to babies within twelve hours of birth. Aspirin may be purchased in drug stores without a prescription for two to three rubles for ten tablets. For other medicines a prescription is required, but pharmacies often do not have the prescribed medicine in stock.
3. All dentists work in polyclinics, and a patient often has to wait several months before he is able to get an appointment. Amalgam fillings are free, but there is a charge for all prosthetic work, which is done in a laboratory in Riga. There are still a few dental technicians in Lepaya, most of whom work privately, against the law.

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Private Cars

4. Anyone with the money to purchase a car may do so; however, because of the high cost and scarcity of cars in Latvia, very few people own cars. The prices of motor vehicles are as follows:

Pobeda - 16,000 rubles
 Moskvich - 9,000 rubles
 IZ motorcycle (copy of German DKW)- 3,800 rubles

It is necessary to bribe the manager of a State motor vehicle store when purchasing an automobile, since such items are not kept in stock. [REDACTED]

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Motor vehicles and parts may be purchased at 16 Kirova Street, Riga, the only authorized place in Latvia to purchase such items. Many Latvians purchased vehicles and parts in Minsk, Belorussian SSR, which was often the nearest place to purchase them.

5. There are two types of driver's license in Latvia, the professional driver's license, issued to taxi and truck drivers after completion of a three-month course at a drivers' school, and the recreational driver's license, issued on the basis of a medical exam, an oral exam on traffic regulations, and a driving test. The professional license costs 700 rubles; the medical exam for the recreational license costs 10 rubles and the form for requesting permission to take the oral exam, 5 rubles.
6. License plates are issued by the traffic militia on application. The applicant is summoned to the militia station two or three weeks after submission of his application and is issued plates, for which he pays a registration fee of forty rubles and twenty rubles for the plates. The traffic militia also issues each driver a "technical card", which gives data on the car and has a record of the compulsory biannual inspection of motor vehicles; "penalty card I" is also issued to each driver, who retains it until he has an accident. After the first accident a driver receives penalty card II, and after the second accident he receives penalty card III; the driver's license is rescinded after three violations have been committed.
7. Minor repairs on cars may be obtained at the few remaining mechanical workshops. Since no spare parts are available, repairs consist of welding, drilling, and reconditioning old parts. The price for a motor tune-up is 350 rubles. When spare parts are available, the black market price is always charged. The official price for a new car battery is 75 rubles; on the black market they may be purchased for 200 rubles. Since a new battery is difficult to obtain, drivers usually buy old batteries which have been reconditioned. Officially, a driver may ask permission to buy new tires after traveling 21,000 km on the old ones; the technical card has a record of mileage. Tires also are purchased at 16 Kirova Street, Riga, and the official price for a 4.5 x 16 tire and tube is 200 rubles; the black market price is 350 rubles. If the tires are not available there, they will tell the driver where he can buy tires on the black market. Before a person can buy black market tires, he must present his automobile credentials and identification.
8. Gasoline for private use is usually purchased from truck drivers, who sell 5 to 20 liters at a time for 1 to 1.5 rubles a liter. If a person has connections, he can buy a barrel of gasoline from a truck driver or filling station attendant. Gasoline coupons for 5 to 50 liters are issued in Riga to factories, officials, and government firms, and must be validated by the stamp of the respective office. Gasoline obtained on these coupons is paid for by this same office on a quarterly or monthly basis. The only filling station in Lepaya is on Brivibas Street.

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9. The official speed limit in cities is 35 km per hour; in rural areas it is 50 km per hour, unless indicated otherwise by highway signs. Traffic militia patrols stop any car which is speeding; the penalty for speeding in rural areas is a fine of 50 rubles, but speeding in the city is punishable by up to six months in prison and revocation of the driver's license. Large cities have traffic lights with red, yellow, and green lights. Road maps are not necessary because the highways are well marked by road signs. No special documents are required for driving on the highways.

Railroad Transportation

10. Train tickets are marked with a coach number. They are checked and punched at the gate to the trains and inspected again by the female coach attendant before the passenger goes aboard. The conductor checks tickets on the train; two such checks are made on the trip from Riga to Lepaya. Third-class fare from Riga to Lepaya is 37 rubles, second-class, 50 rubles, and sleeping accommodations, 74 rubles. The uniform of the railroad militia consists of red hats, violet trousers and tunic, with blue stripes on the trousers, and crossed belts with a saber and pistol.

Coastal Activity at Lepaya

11. An artillery unit is stationed on the right side of Kurmajas prospekt along the shore. The area is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Fishermen said that mines are placed in the harbor whenever there is any international tension; when the tension disappears, the mines are removed. There are two beaches where swimming is permitted. The largest beach extends from the Brothers' Cemetery to the center mole (sic). Buoys are placed beyond the third sand bank to mark the limits of the bathing area. The militia patrols the area to see that no one swims out to far, beyond the buoys. The frontier guard also patrols the beaches at times.

Housing in Lepaya

12. Housing in Lepaya is controlled by forty-eight housing administrations (sic; These administrations appoint house managers (name parvaldnieks), who are in charge of 15 to 35 houses. This manager appoints a superintendent or janitor (setnieks), who is responsible for maintaining the house book up to date. Any accident or illness is to be reported to the polyclinic at once.

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)
SUBJECT Road Conditions in Latvia

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Following is a list of roads in Latvia with brief comments on the condition of these roads, fueling facilities, bridge conditions, and other pertinent information:

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1. Lepaya - Rolava: This road is of asphalt and stone and is in good condition. Two large trucks can pass each other easily on this road. No road-building machines are available or used in Latvia. The Soviet T-34 tanks travel on this road without leaving imprints. There is no specific speed limit. There are no gasoline stations on this road, but there is one in Lepaya. There is a gasoline dump at the Military Harbor in Lepaya. For emergency use, there are piles of sand along the road to fill holes in the asphalt. This road is used by all kinds of traffic, including horses and pedestrians. All motor vehicles and bicycles have license plates made of metal, one plate on the front and another on the rear of the vehicle. The navy uses a white plate with black numbers; the army, a black plate with white or yellow numbers; and civilian plates are yellow with black numbers, that is, a letter and number combination. The issue of plates is controlled by the MGB.
2. Rolava - Dobeles: This road is of gravel from Rolava to Skrunda, ruined asphalt from Skrunda to Saldus, gravel from Saldus to a point 35 km from Saldus on the road to Dobeles, and asphalt from that point into Dobeles. There are no gasoline stations along this road. The width of the road is about twelve meters. The road is used by all kinds of vehicles; T-34 tanks use this road, which is in good condition.
3. Dobeles - Yelgava: This road is asphalt, and the bridges over the small rivers are in good repair.
4. Yelgava - Riga: Asphalt; all bridges are in good repair. There is one gasoline station in Yelgava, near the railroad station. The road is in good condition.

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5. Riga - Valmiera: Asphalt, in good condition; all bridges are in good repair. This road is used by all types of vehicles. There are several gasoline stations in Riga, but there are none in Sigulda and Cesis, and only one in Valmiera.
6. Valmiera - Ainaži: Gravel, in good condition; all types of vehicles use this road, which goes through Matisi and Aloja. There is free access to Estonia. Ditches are along the road.
7. Ainaži - Parnu, Estonia: Partly gravel, remainder asphalt; the road is in good condition. All types of vehicles use the road, and there are ditches along the sides of it.
8. Parnu, Estonia - Tartu, Estonia: Asphalt, in very good condition; there are ditches, and all vehicles use this road.
9. Tartu, Estonia - Valka: Asphalt at the beginning, changing to gravel; the road is in good condition and has ditches; all vehicles use this road.
10. Valka - Valmiera: Gravel, in good condition; there are ditches and the road is suitable for all vehicles.
11. Lepaya - Kuldiga: Asphalt at first, changing to gravel; the road runs through Grobina and Aizpute and is in good condition. It is gravel to Rolya, has ditches, and is suitable for all vehicles. There is a gas station at Kuldiga. The bridges are in good repair.
12. Kuldiga - Kandava, via Renda and Sabile: Gravel, in good condition; all bridges are in good repair, there are ditches, and the road is used by T-34 tanks.
13. Kandava - Riga: Gravel, in good condition; the bridges are in good repair, there are ditches, and the road is suitable for all vehicles. There are gas stations only in Riga.
14. Lepaya - Jurkalne, via Medze: Asphalt to Medze, gravel from there on; the road has ditches, is in good condition, the bridges are in good repair, and is suitable for all vehicles. T-34 tanks use this road.
15. Jurkalne - Ventspils: Gravel, in good condition; there are ditches, all bridges are in good repair, and the road is suitable for all vehicles. There is a gas station only in Lepaya.
16. Ventspils - Tukums, via Ugale and Talsi: Gravel, in good condition; there are ditches, and the road is suitable for all vehicles. From Talsi to Tukums, the road is in very good condition.
17. Lepaya - Ezere, via Priekule: Asphalt to Grobina, gravel from there on; the road is in good condition, has ditches, and the bridges are in good repair. The road is suitable for all vehicles, but there are no gasoline stations on the road.
18. Ezere - Auce - Saldus: Gravel, in good condition; the bridges are in good repair, there are ditches, and the road is suitable for all vehicles. There are no gas stations along this road.
19. Priekule - Skuodas, Lithuania: Gravel, in good condition; there are no gas stations along this road.
20. Lepaya - Nica: Asphalt, in good condition; the road is suitable for all vehicles, but there are no gas stations on the road.
21. Nica - Rucava: Gravel, in good condition; the bridges are in good repair, and the road is suitable for all vehicles.

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